



General Provider Requirements for Vendors

General

Tennessee's Early Intervention System (TEIS) has state employed personnel who provide service coordination, developmental assessments, developmental intervention, and child find and public awareness activities through nine Single Point of Entry District Offices (SPOE). In addition, TEIS provides services through contracts with providers such as an Early Intervention Resource Agency (EIRA). TEIS also has agencies and individuals who are interested in providing services as required by Part C of IDEA. These agencies and individuals may enter into Vendor Agreements with Office of Early Childhood (OEC) for the purpose of service provision if they possess the appropriate licenses and credentials. Vendor Agencies have staff members that are licensed individually as is appropriate for their discipline. Entities such as clinics, hospitals, home health agencies and others may enter into a vendor agreement with the Tennessee Department of Education. Vendor agreements are also arranged between the Tennessee Department of Education and individuals who agree and are qualified to provide a specific service. In all situations the vendor agreements require that state and federal regulations regarding IDEA Part C must be followed. In the vendor agreements, the state is purchasing the service only. The Vendors bill for the services rendered.

Direct intervention services specified on the IFSP are provided through programs operating within the TEIS district. These Include:

- State Employed Developmental Therapists
- Early Intervention Resource Agency (EIRA) – Service programs in various locations in the state funded by the TN Department of Education. These agencies have a specific focus including rural service delivery, outreach and services to the Non-English Speaking community, and specialty services related to children with autism and behavioral concerns.
- Vendor Service Providers - Agencies establish Vendor Agreements with the State of Tennessee for specific services such as physical therapy, occupation therapy, speech language therapy and/or assistive technology

This section contains information about requirements that are applicable to vendors rendering a service for Tennessee's Early Intervention System (TEIS). Provider agencies or individual practitioners who want to provide and directly bill for services within TEIS must submit appropriate documentation. Any agency or individual who is interested in a Vendor Agreement should contact the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) for specific instructions regarding the information that is required. The contact for information regarding vendor agreements is as follows:

Contract Manager
Division of Special Education
Office of Early Childhood
7th Floor, Andrew Johnson Tower
710 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, TN 37243-0380

Orientation

The OEC Central Office staff or designee provides an orientation program for vendors. The Orientation program includes components such as this Operations Manual, IDEA Part C State and Federal Regulations, TEIS Policy Manual, and monitoring indicators of compliance.

Public Awareness and Child Find

Vendors participate in public awareness by informing the public in their population of service about early intervention services. Vendors may also be involved in child find activities if those arrangements are a part of their agreement.

Primary Referral Source

Vendors may be regarded as primary referral sources for early intervention in that these agencies may receive information directly from other community agencies or individuals about a child who is suspected of having developmental delays. Clinics, hospitals, home health agencies and other health care providers who are vendors especially may be involved in receiving notification/referral information. In these situations, the vendors will submit the information to the SPOE District Office immediately in order that the information regarding the child may be entered into the system appropriately as a notification/referral.

Request for Potential Service Provision

The SPOE District Office processes the notification/referral by assigning a Service Coordinator immediately who will contact the family and schedule a meeting. The Service Coordinator, along with the eligibility team determines if the child is eligible for TEIS.

For eligible children, the Service Coordinator contacts EIRAs and vendors as needed to determine the availability for potentially needed services. The Service Coordinator obtains a signed release from the parents in order to release personally identifiable information to the potential providers (vendors) for the purposes of determining service availability and accessibility. The selection of potential service providers is based on the following:

- County or zip code where the family resides is considered in relation to the location of the provider to the family's home or other natural environment location
 - Family's lifestyle. Looking at family assessment-type information in order to best accommodate the family's regular life routines. When does intervention best fit into the family's daily life to cause the least disruption?
 - The expertise of potential service providers is considered in relationship to the needs of the child and family. The provider's background, experience and training with certain populations or disabilities such as autism, visual impairment, hearing impairment, Down Syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, behavioral concerns, social detachment conditions and others may be considered when beginning the process of connecting the family with the appropriate service provider.
 - Availability and accessibility of the provider to provide services in the natural environment
- Note: Federal and State target of compliance – timely delivery of services. IFSP services begin no later than 30 days from the start date listed on the IFSP Service Page. This timeline is taken into account when identifying availability for a potential service provider.

The final decision for a provider (vendor) will be made after the actual development of the IFSP outcomes that incorporates family assessment information related to natural environments (including routines), concerns, priorities and resources, supports and services. The Service Coordinator collaborates with the TEIS SPOE Leadership Team and is responsible for identifying appropriate service providers for eligible children once a service has been determined as needed by an IFSP team.

IFSP Participation

Once the service provider (vendor) is confirmed, the service information is entered onto the IFSP and the provider is expected to continue to contribute to the IFSP team through service provision and communication with other team members. The Service Coordinator ensures that the provider is notified of the confirmation of the service by that particular provider. The service provider is responsible for keeping the Service Coordinator informed regarding any progress involving the child.

Assessment

The vendor/provider uses the assessment information provided in the IFSP to develop intervention plans for the child and family. The vendor administers the assessment specified in the IFSP document, such as a physical therapy assessment, within the timeframe allowed or communicates the need for additional time if needed to the Service Coordinator.

Service Delivery

The Service Coordinator enters the information about the vendor/provider into TEIDS as a user and informs the vendor/provider. The vendor/provider is able to access TEIDS information about the child and family. The vendor/provider is responsible for the following:

- Obtains orders from the physician as needed
- Contacts the family and schedules the initial session within 30 days from the planned start date on the IFSP
- Allows the current IFSP a sufficient amount of time (3-4 months) to assess progress
- Enters information regarding each session on the Service Log in TEIDS within three working days from the date of service. Note: vendors follow the Medicare guideline for billing known as the “eight minute rule.” The rule provides guidelines about how to round time into 15-minute increments for billing purposes. The guidelines are as follows 53-67 minutes=1 hour TEIS Invoice Service Unit.
- Date entered into Service Log is the actual date of the service delivery
- Enters information related to communication with the family and other team members in the Contact Log in TEIDS
- Reviews communication from other team members in the Contact Log and Service Log to ensure that all team members are providing support and services to the family in a coordinated and comprehensive manner

Transition

Vendor/providers participate in transition of children who exit the system the day before the child's third birthday. Vendor/providers are available to complete assessments as specified in Transition Plans, participate in the development of the Transition Plan and provide suggestions and recommendations regarding supports and services needed for the child after exit.

Early Intervention System of Operation

Vendor agencies establish and maintain a system of operation that meets the requirements as defined by the agreement with the State of Tennessee Department of Education.

- Agencies have a current approved Agreement between the State of Tennessee Department of Education and the agency on file.
- Agencies' invoices reflect actual service rendered.
- Agencies maintain documentation for all charges against the state under the Agreement with the State of Tennessee Department of Education for a period of three years from the date of the final payment.
- Agencies ensure that the early intervention services provided for eligible children meet the definition of early intervention services and are provided in manner consistent with state and federal requirements for services under IDEA Part C.
- Agencies ensure that those seeking to provide early intervention service meet the requirements and standards established by the Lead Agency.

Data Collection and Reporting

Vendors are responsible for entering data and ensuring accuracy in Tennessee Early Intervention Data System (TEIDS). TEIDS is a web-based data system which tracks a child's progress and includes an accounts payable feature. If the Tennessee Department of Education requests additional licensure information or data, vendors comply with requests.

Description of the Claims Processing System

Services provided by vendors are processed via an individual purchase of services system. This system allows billing and payments for a variety of services. The system has the following features:

- All services are based on a fee for service
- All payments for services are on a reimbursement basis
- Services are billed on a calendar month basis
- All billings for the prior month are due to OEC by the due date as specified through the Central Reimbursement Office (CRO)
- TEIS is the payor of last resort - all other funding sources must be exhausted before requesting TEIS funds be used, including TennCare, private insurance and other third party funding

Note: Vendors follow what is referred to as the "8 Minute Rule." The 8 Minute Rule is based on Medicare's guidelines for billing. This ruling provides guidelines about how to round time into 15-minute increments for billing purposes. The premise is that the time spent in direct care will average 5 minutes in length when following the guidelines for rounding. The guidelines are as follows:
53-67 minutes=1 hour TEIS Invoice Service Unit.

Vendor Responsibilities Related to Reimbursement of Claims

Vendor responsibilities include the following:

- Submission of documents and requests required for establishment as a vendor within the claims processing system
- Submission of accurate and timely monthly billings for provision of authorized services
- Submission of timely rebilling or correction
- Submission of documentation as required to justify units of service billed
- Submission of additional claims processing information as requested by the OEC Central Reimbursement Office
- Notification to the OEC /CRO in the event of errors, omissions or additions
- Notification to the OEC /CRO in the event that a child/family's Medicaid, Social Security number or private insurance information changes
- Notification to the OEC /CRO regarding needed provider record updates or corrections on the claims processing system

Establishing a Provider Account on the Claims Processing System

The following requirements must be met prior to receiving reimbursement for services:

- A valid and current file in the State of Tennessee Accounting and Recording System (STARS) with Direct Deposit must be established
- Licensure, if required, must be verified
- An approved IFSP authorizing service for the appropriate dates must be entered into the claims processing system database for each service recipient for whom a claim is submitted
- An Agency Number Assigned by OEC
- A valid site code
- An executed Department of Education Agreement
- A federal identification number such as the individual's social security number

Establishing a Provider Account

Vendors will need to be established in the STARS system. Vendor information must be verified to ensure active status on the STARS system. To set up or activate a provider's status, a substitute W9 and Provider File Data Sheet, (FA-0089) along with an ACH direct deposit form and voided check or deposit slip must be submitted to the OEC/CRO. All vendors are required to accept payment by direct deposit. The Vendor File Data Sheet form is used for original set up of the provider and for any subsequent changes to name, address or any other information in the STARS record.

Agency Numbers

In order for OEC to authorize services for any service recipient, the vendor must be assigned an OEC Agency Number. This five-digit agency number is unique to the provider and does not change. The agency number is

used to prepare billing and invoice statements as well as to make direct deposits to the vendor's account. The OEC/CRO must complete the form entitled Request for Agency Number for Billing Purposes for an agency number to be assigned. The vendors will need to furnish the name of the organization, the billing address, a business fax and phone number, the name of the chief executive officer/executive director, and the name of the Board chair or agency owner for completion of the form. Assignment of numbers is sequential, based on receipt of the request. Only one number should be assigned per vendor, regardless of the number of sites, unless services are provided in more than one region of the State. Vendors serving more than one region should have a different number in each region.

Service Authorization

TEIS SPOE District Offices are responsible for approval of IFSPs to authorize services and supports. Entries into TEIDS are created in the Service Log by the vendors. This produces information that is populated into TEIDS Accounts Payable.

Corrections in TEIDS

Any corrections to names, Social Security Numbers, TennCare numbers or other information must be communicated to the TEIS SPOE District Office.

Service Limits

Services are reimbursed in accordance with limits approved in the IFSP. OEC will not provide payment for services provided in excess of the authorized limits.

Retroactive Requests for Service Authorization

Payment of retroactive service authorization requests is prohibited. The OEC Director or Part C Coordinator must approve any exceptions in writing.

Claims Processing

Invoice Report

The Invoice Report created from TEIDS is the official billing document for services used to process claims in the OEC Central Reimbursement Office (CRO). The OEC/CRO prepares this report monthly and distributes it to each provider billing for services rendered. The Invoice Report details the services approved for each service recipient that may be billed by the provider. Vendors should verify the information.

Timeliness and Accuracy of Claims

Claims must be accurate. The vendor must maintain documentation to justify all service units billed. Initial billings for TEIS sole payor service units must be made within sixty (60) days from the date of service. Service units involving commercial insurance with explanation of benefits (EOB's) must be submitted within one hundred and twenty (120) days. Rebilling should occur as soon as possible.

Corrections and Late Billing

Corrections or late billings must be submitted in a timely manner. Corrections must go through the OEC /CRO. Questions about delays and/or corrections are generally directed to the area of the state that the vendor serves: East TN (including Knoxville, Johnson City, Chattanooga) 615-253-2595
Middle TN (including Cookeville, Nashville, Clarksville) 615-253-4029
West TN (including Jackson, Martin, Memphis) 615-253-4030

Monthly Payment of Routine Claims

Services are compensated in accordance with those monthly billing statements for the months of July through June. OEC/CRO makes payments at the end of each month for the preceding month. If the claims are submitted late, payment will be made during the following month.

Denial of Claims

Claims documents are compared to services authorized per the IFSP and entered into TEIDS. If the appropriate information is not entered in TEIDS, the claim will be denied. Vendors may contact the OEC /CRO for questions regarding the denial of claims and information regarding resubmission of the claim.